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## **USDA Amends Brucellosis Testing and Certification Requirements**

Washington, DATE, 2014 -- The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service today issued a final rule amending its regulations on testing and certification for brucellosis class-free states and certified brucellosis-free herds. The final rule amends the interim rule that was made effective and published in the Federal Register in 2010.

The 2010 interim rule made changes to the existing brucellosis regulations in order to focus resources on areas that will most effectively control and prevent the spread of the disease, while still maintaining the economic viability of the domestic livestock industry.

This final rule contains some changes from the interim rule, which are based upon public comments APHIS received. These changes take effect on [insert date 60 days after publication]. Changes to the final rule are:

- allowing States with 5 years or more Class Free status the flexibility to develop their own brucellosis surveillance program or participate in the national brucellosis surveillance; and
- changing the age when cattle and domestic bison need to be included in routine herd blood tests from 6 months to 18 months, except for steers and spayed heifers,

in order to best target sexually mature animals who have the greatest risk of transmitting the disease.

Brucellosis is a contagious disease caused by bacteria that affects both animals and humans. The disease mainly affects cattle, bison and swine, causing loss of young through spontaneous abortion or birth of weak offspring, reduced milk production, and infertility. There is no economically feasible treatment for brucellosis in livestock. In humans, brucellosis initially causes flu-like symptoms and can be treated with antibiotics.

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